

### **Information:**

At its December meeting, the P-16 Council addressed an array of projects undertaken statewide pertaining to teacher quality, curriculum alignment, and student transition from the K-12 into the postsecondary system.

Mr. William McCann, Chair of the Task Force on Postsecondary Education of the Prichard Committee, was a guest speaker at the meeting. He expressed that organization's interest in working with the P-16 Council, suggesting public meetings, soliciting the advice and active involvement of educators statewide and experts outside the state, and the development of a data base on matters of curriculum alignment and problems related to student transition between high school and postsecondary institutions. He identified various civic groups, in addition to the Prichard Committee, who have expressed interest in supporting the work of the P-16 Council, and he urged a more formal structure and broader Council membership. The Council is reviewing P-16 council structures in other states in order to consider membership and other organizational issues, including local councils.

Mr. Gordon Davies reported on the Governor's Task Force on Teacher Quality, which made several recommendations regarding teacher preparation. These include increasing the content knowledge of teachers through extensive involvement of the arts and sciences faculty in teacher preparation programs and strengthening the classroom competency of new teacher candidates by forging partnerships between teacher preparation programs and local K-12 school districts. The Task Force recommended the reconstitution of the Education Professional Standards Board as an autonomous entity responsible for teacher preparation and certification, which would report to the General Assembly. It also called for the P-16 Council, in cooperation with the EPSB and other agencies, to oversee the alignment of curricula offered at both the K-12 and postsecondary levels, along with the curriculum provided by teacher preparation programs, and to report the results of this review to the Legislative Research Commission by January 1, 2001.

Mr. Davies conveyed Council on Postsecondary Education recommendations on the incentive trust fund proposals for teacher quality and a public communications campaign to raise the level of education aspiration statewide. The staff reported on Council action awarding Eisenhower funds for middle school math and science teacher academies, as well as involvement of the Kentucky Commonwealth Virtual University in extending the availability of teaching modules to be developed by these teacher academies.

Mr. Gene Wilhoit, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Education, reported on the Kentucky Virtual High School, announced by Governor Paul Patton in October 1999. The KVHS is designed to provide educational access to high school students throughout the state through distance learning. By Fall 2000, the KVHS will provide courses throughout the curriculum, with emphasis on higher-level offerings in mathematics, the sciences, languages, social sciences, and the humanities.

Council on Postsecondary Education and KDE staff have begun the process of evaluating the predictive validity of CATS scores for college success, starting with the current college performance in English of recent high school graduates, whose writing portfolios formed the basis for the first CATS scores. They have also begun work on evaluating alternatives for junior-year high school diagnostic testing in mathematics. Representative Jon Draud has filed a bill to establish a statewide program, housed at a public university, to administer a mathematics diagnostic test to all interested 10<sup>th</sup>- and 11<sup>th</sup>-grade public and private school students in the state.

President Gary Ransdell, of Western Kentucky University, and Professor Julia Roberts, Director of WKU's Center for Gifted Studies, presented a program proposal for the Kentucky Academy for Math and Science, which would offer accelerated learning opportunities and residential early admissions to talented and motivated high school students across the state who have demonstrated interest in careers in mathematics and the sciences.

The Council and KDE staff have developed a "Frequently Asked Questions" information sheet and continue to expand its mailing list to address the Council's various constituencies and audiences and to extend awareness of the importance of a coherent vision and coordinated system of basic education.

# **Frequently Asked Questions About the Kentucky P-16 Council**

## ***What is the Kentucky P-16 Council?***

The Council is made up of three members of the Kentucky Board of Education, three members of the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, the state Commissioner of Education, and the President of the Council on Postsecondary Education. Created in spring 1999, it conducted the first of its quarterly meetings in July 1999. Advancing both KERA and House Bill 1, the P-16 Council advises the Board of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education on the preparation and development of teachers, the alignment of competency standards, and the elimination of barriers impeding student transition from preschool through the baccalaureate.

## ***Why was it formed?***

To help Kentucky achieve its ambitious goals for education reform by improving cooperation and communication among elementary, secondary, and postsecondary teachers and administrators. Kentucky trails national averages for percentages of its population that go to college, stay there, and graduate. The P-16 Council champions initiatives that motivate Kentuckians to complete high school and postsecondary education.

## ***What objectives is the Council pursuing?***

- Better aligning the curriculum and requirements between high schools and colleges to make clear what every student needs to know and should be able to do at each educational level.
- Raising the quality of teachers through improved preparation and professional development.
- Increasing the number and diversity of students attending college by stressing programs that persuade parents and students to plan early for advanced education.

## ***What has the P-16 Council done so far?***

- Endorsed large-scale projects to improve math and science teaching in the middle schools.
- Promoted funding proposals for innovative approaches to teacher education.
- Initiated teams of teachers in math and literacy from across the Kentucky P-16 system who will develop consistent expectations for student learning at every level.
- Sponsored research for tests that reveal to high school students any academic deficiencies they must correct before applying to college.

- Recommended a statewide campaign to promote postsecondary education for all Kentuckians.
- Coordinated involvement of the Kentucky Commonwealth Virtual University in projects to extend the access of education to teachers and students.

### ***Do other states have P-16 Councils?***

More than 20 states have P-16 organizations and that number is expected to grow. Although the structure and emphasis of the organizations vary, the concerns of teacher education, curriculum alignment, and student transition focus discussions nationwide.

### ***What is the relationship of the P-16 Council to local education groups?***

The Kentucky P-16 Council encourages the creation of local P-16 Councils that bring together educators from preschools, elementary and secondary schools, and colleges, as well as employers and community leaders, to better meet the educational needs of an area. In working with local councils and boards of education, the state Council offers advice and seeks to be a catalyst for ongoing improvement.

### ***How do people find out more about the P-16 Council?***

The agendas for all meetings and other materials, including the schedule for future meetings, are on the websites of the Council on Postsecondary Education ([www.cpe.state.ky.us](http://www.cpe.state.ky.us)) and the Kentucky Department of Education ([www.kde.state.ky.us](http://www.kde.state.ky.us)). Its spring meeting schedule is March 20, 2000, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. (following the Council on Postsecondary Education meeting), and June 8, 2000, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (following the State Board of Education meeting).